



# Advance Monthly Retail Sales

## August 1989

U.S. Department of Commerce  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

CB-89-150

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The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for August adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences but not for price changes were \$144.3 billion, 6.3 percent above August 1988. Total sales in the June through August period were 5.8 percent above the same period a year ago.

Durable goods were 8.0 percent above August 1988, with furniture stores and the automotive group up 8.6 and 8.1 percent, respectively.

Nondurable goods were up 5.3 percent from the previous year. General merchandise stores decreased 0.9 percent from July but were 5.1 percent above August 1988. Food stores were up 6.1 percent from the previous year while gasoline service stations were up 7.0 percent in the same period.

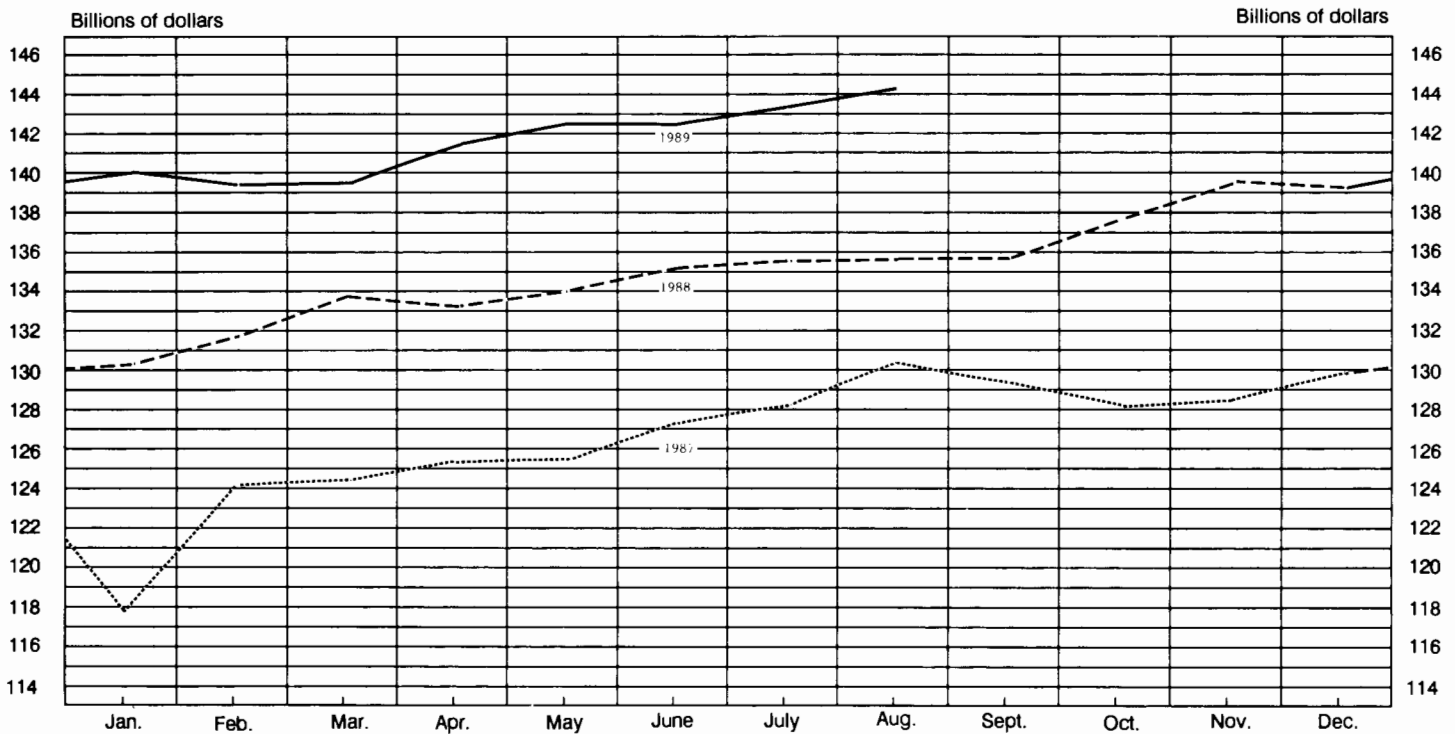
**Note:** Since this survey is based on a sample, the estimates will differ from the universe values due to both sampling and nonsampling error. For the year-to-year and quarter-to-quarter percent changes shown at the total, durable, and nondurable levels, the margins of sampling error range from 1.6 to 4.3 percentage points above and below the estimate. See page 4 for a more complete description.

The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for September is scheduled to be released October 13, 1989 at 8:30 a.m.

### ESTIMATED MONTHLY RETAIL SALES

January 1987-August 1989

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences)



Address inquiries concerning this report to Ronald Plencykoski, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-5294 or 763-7561.

This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board (N-8-1) (202-377-3870) and through the Census Bureau's online information service-CENDATA. CENDATA is available from Dialog Information Services, INC. (1-800-334-2464) and CompuServe (1-800-848-8199). The CENDATA staff at the Bureau of the Census (301-763-2074) can provide content information and general guidance.

**Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business**

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted					Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
		1989			1988		1989			1988	
		Aug. <sup>2</sup> adv.	July prel.	June final	Aug.	July	Aug. <sup>2</sup> adv.	July prel.	June final	Aug. <sup>2</sup> adv.	July <sup>2</sup>
	Retail trade, total.....	150,360	142,373	147,055	140,201	135,371	144,285	143,271	142,500	135,732	135,741
	Total (excl. auto group)...	114,613	109,687	112,039	107,238	103,526	111,782	111,584	111,335	105,661	104,866
	Durable goods, total.....	59,751	55,073	58,702	55,153	53,020	55,764	54,439	54,016	51,629	52,435
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers..	8,521	8,162	8,737	8,150	7,814	7,739	7,576	7,593	7,371	7,291
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores.	(*)	5,893	6,192	5,957	5,675	(*)	5,338	5,384	5,225	5,202
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	1,254	1,307	1,186	1,240	(*)	1,201	1,193	1,168	1,176
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	35,747	32,686	35,016	32,963	31,845	32,503	31,687	31,165	30,071	30,875
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	32,802	29,984	32,260	30,188	29,200	29,874	29,111	28,599	27,569	28,377
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	26,498	28,278	27,001	25,878	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	2,702	2,756	2,775	2,645	(*)	2,576	2,566	2,502	2,498
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	8,548	7,989	8,308	7,837	7,490	8,380	8,247	8,412	7,719	7,702
571	Furniture and home furnishings..	(*)	3,789	3,957	3,910	3,742	(*)	3,870	3,910	3,760	3,799
5722,32	Household appliance, radio, and TV stores.....	(*)	3,689	3,822	3,372	3,251	(*)	3,807	3,928	3,392	3,348
5722	Household appliance stores....	(*)	827	864	920	942	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	Nondurable goods, total.....	90,609	87,300	88,353	85,048	82,351	88,521	88,832	88,484	84,103	83,306
53	General merchandise group stores..	15,869	14,167	15,219	14,791	13,309	15,950	16,088	16,025	15,177	15,138
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)	13,425	11,965	12,811	12,451	11,182	13,425	13,520	13,471	12,705	12,678
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) <sup>3</sup>	(*)	12,341	13,205	12,883	11,590	(*)	13,945	13,900	13,146	13,156
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	600	609	659	624	(*)	665	660	684	696
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	1,602	1,799	1,681	1,503	(*)	1,903	1,894	1,788	1,76
54	Food stores.....	30,621	30,908	30,388	28,482	29,015	29,792	29,848	29,592	28,077	27,670
541	Grocery stores.....	28,790	29,081	28,520	26,668	27,166	28,006	28,043	27,770	26,300	25,848
554	Gasoline service stations.....	9,898	9,859	9,819	9,222	8,955	9,199	9,336	9,369	8,595	8,432
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	7,758	6,530	6,834	7,031	6,080	7,438	7,360	7,337	6,841	6,818
561	Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	640	756	684	655	(*)	760	775	764	781
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	(*)	2,494	2,527	2,592	2,373	(*)	2,783	2,792	2,631	2,640
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	1,645	1,734	1,843	1,551	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	1,191	1,298	1,342	1,078	(*)	1,367	1,345	1,224	1,228
58	Eating and drinking places.....	14,684	14,669	14,456	14,298	14,128	13,609	13,748	13,676	13,300	13,118
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	5,126	4,877	5,054	4,831	4,659	5,173	5,101	5,095	4,905	4,868
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	1,707	1,675	1,582	1,684	(*)	1,641	1,641	1,576	1,595
5961 (pt.)	Mail-order houses (department store merchandise).....	(*)	254	264	296	249	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
53,56,57	GAF <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	33,265	35,234	34,414	31,275	(*)	36,904	36,991	34,721	34,671

\*Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available. <sup>2</sup>Revised

<sup>1</sup>Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-89-07.

<sup>2</sup>Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.

<sup>3</sup>Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

<sup>4</sup>GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise.

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

**Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business**

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change					
		Aug. 1989 advance from--		July 1989 preliminary from--		June 1989 through Aug. 1989	
		July 1989 prelim.	Aug. 1988 final	June 1989 final	July 1988 final	Mar. 1989 through May 1989	June 1988 through Aug. 1988
	Retail trade, total.....	+0.7	+6.3	+0.5	+5.5	+1.6	+5.8
	Total (excl. automotive group).....	+0.2	+5.8	+0.2	+6.4	+1.4	+6.3
	Durable goods, total.....	+2.4	+8.0	+0.8	+3.8	+2.0	+5.0
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.....	+2.2	+5.0	-0.2	+3.9	+2.6	+4.0
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	+2.6	+8.1	+1.7	+2.6	+2.1	+4.1
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	+2.6	+8.4	+1.8	+2.6	+2.2	+4.2
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	+1.6	+8.6	-2.0	+7.1	+0.6	+7.6
	Nondurable goods, total.....	-0.4	+5.3	+0.4	+6.6	+1.3	+6.3
53	General merchandise group stores.....	-0.9	+5.1	+0.4	+6.3	+1.5	+5.8
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	-0.7	+5.7	+0.4	+6.6	+1.4	+6.2
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	(NA)	(NA)	+0.3	+6.0	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	-0.2	+6.1	+0.9	+7.9	+1.5	+7.2
541	Grocery stores.....	-0.1	+6.5	+1.0	+8.5	+1.8	+7.7
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-1.5	+7.0	-0.4	+10.7	+1.5	+9.5
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	+1.1	+8.7	+0.3	+7.9	+2.9	+8.8
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-1.0	+2.3	+0.5	+4.8	+0.6	+4.1
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	+1.4	+5.5	+0.1	+4.8	+0.2	+5.0

**Table 3. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales of Group II Companies, by Kind of Business**

(Sales in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted			Adjusted <sup>1</sup>		
		July 1989 prelim.	June 1989 final	July 1988	July 1989 prelim.	June 1989 final	July <sup>r</sup> 1988
	Retail trade, total.....	50,916	52,244	47,757	53,253	53,073	49,700
53	General merchandise group stores.....	13,099	14,124	12,271	14,968	14,899	14,055
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	11,577	12,393	10,823	13,067	13,032	12,271
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.).....	11,942	12,773	11,209	13,479	13,431	12,709
533	Variety stores.....	470	487	483	533	525	553
539	Miscellaneous general merchandise stores.....	1,052	1,244	965	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	16,935	16,695	16,175	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
541	Grocery stores.....	16,706	16,462	15,951	16,346	16,219	15,397
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	3,485	3,708	3,220	4,007	3,996	3,676
562,3,8	Women's clothing, specialty stores, furriers.....	1,402	1,428	1,292	1,556	1,554	1,420
566	Shoe stores.....	735	817	679	853	842	782
591	Drug stores and proprietary stores.....	2,892	3,029	2,690	3,064	3,078	2,856

NA Not available. <sup>r</sup> Revised

<sup>1</sup>Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-11 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-89-07.

<sup>2</sup>Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

Note: The Group II component of the sample consists of companies which had 11 or more retail establishments according to the most recent update of multi-establishment files and which were selected with certainty (i.e., their sales size exceeded specified dollar volume cutoffs which vary by kind of business).



## Sample Design and Reliability of Data

The advance sales estimates are based on early reporting of sales by a small subsample of the Bureau's retail survey panel. Because of the early reporting, the advance estimates can differ from the subsequent estimates which are based on monthly reports obtained from the full sample of retail stores. In addition, sampling variability between the subsample used for the advance estimates and the full sample can cause a difference.

Percentage differences between advance and full sample preliminary estimates of month-to-month percentage change in seasonally adjusted total retail store sales have ranged from approximately -0.4 percent to +0.7 percent with the average of the absolute differences about 0.3 percent for the past 12 months. For individual kind-of-business groups, these differences tend to be higher. Sampling variability of and revisions to advance-to-preliminary estimates are shown in table 4 below.

Preliminary estimates for July 1989 and final estimates for June 1989 based on the full sample will be published later this month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for July (BR-89-07). The complete report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and will present a description of revisions, and the techniques used in developing the estimates.

The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, indicates a range about the estimate which corresponds to a 90 percent confidence interval. If, for example, the estimate is up .8 percent and the margin of sampling error is 1.2 percentage points above or below the estimate, then the indicated range is -.4 percent to +2.0 percent. If the range contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. The Monthly Retail Trade Report includes explanations of confidence intervals and sampling variability along with additional measures of sampling variability.

Table 4. Sampling Variability of and Revision to Advance-to-Preliminary Estimate

SIC code	Kind of Business	Estimated coefficient of Variation in percent of the						Preliminary-to-final percent change minus the Advance-to-preliminary percent change			
		Advance-to- preliminary ratio		Ratio to same month a year ago	Dollar volume sales est.	Ratio of current quarter to prev. quarter					
		Range <sup>1</sup> From To	Median	Median	Median	Median	Range <sup>2</sup> From To	Mean	Aver. o absolut diff.		
	Retail trade, total.....	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.8	1.0	-0.4	+0.7	+0.1	0.3
	Total (excl. auto).	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.9	-1.0	+1.8	0.0	0.4
	Durable goods, total..	1.4	1.7	1.6	2.3	1.7	2.2	-1.6	+1.8	+0.3	1.0
52	Building materials, group stores.....	0.6	3.6	1.6	3.9	3.3	3.1	-5.2	+1.5	-0.9	1.6
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.7	2.2	1.9	3.1	2.3	3.0	-2.1	+2.7	+0.4	1.2
551,2,5, 6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.2	2.2	1.5	3.7	2.4	3.2	-2.5	+2.8	+0.3	1.2
57	Furniture, home furn. and equipment stores.....	1.6	2.3	1.9	3.7	3.3	2.7	-3.3	+4.4	+0.5	1.5
	Nondur. stores, total...	0.5	0.7	0.6	1.0	0.7	0.9	-0.8	+0.7	0.0	0.4
53	General merch. group, total.	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.5	-2.6	+1.8	-0.2	0.8
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.).....	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	-2.1	+2.0	-0.2	0.8
54	Food stores.....	0.8	1.4	1.0	1.6	1.3	1.6	-0.9	+0.8	+0.1	0.3
541	Grocery stores.....	0.3	1.1	0.5	1.8	1.4	1.6	-0.8	+0.9	+0.1	0.3
554	Gasoline service stations...	0.7	1.2	0.8	3.0	2.2	2.8	-1.4	+2.3	-0.1	1.0
56	Apparel and acc. stores.....	1.2	3.4	1.5	2.4	1.8	1.8	-2.8	+2.2	-0.5	1.3
58	Eating and drinking .....	0.8	1.3	1.1	2.7	2.3	2.6	-1.7	+1.8	+0.3	0.9
591	Drug and proprietary .....	0.4	0.7	0.5	2.3	1.7	2.1	-1.6	+1.3	-0.1	0.7

<sup>1</sup>The ranges of sampling variability shown are based on sales estimates unadjusted for seasonal variation, holiday, and trading-day differences for the data months of March - July 1988.

<sup>2</sup>The ranges shown for the retail trade total are based on sales estimates adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences for the 12-month period, August 1988 - July 1989. The ranges for all other totals and kinds of business are based on the 12-month period May 1987-April 1988.

Note: Coefficients of variation for the ratio of current quarter to current quarter a-year-ago estimates are approximately the same as those for the ratio of current quarter to previous quarter. See appendix B, Reliability of Data, in the Monthly Retail Trade Report for a discussion on the measures of sampling variability.